

1146.

A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

O F

Mrs. *REBEKAH STENNETT.*

(Price Sixpence.)

122

[Redacted]

SEARMON



DEATH

OF

Mrs. REBEKAH STEWART

[Redacted]

(The Spectator)

God *the* Portion of *his* People.

A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

O F

Mrs. *REBEKAH STENNETT*,

Late Wife of

The Reverend Mr. JOSEPH STENNETT,

Who departed this LIFE *June* 24, 1744.

P R E A C H E D

In *Little-Wild-Street*.

By SAMUEL WILSON.

L O N D O N :

Printed for AARON WARD, in *Little Britain*;
JOHN OSWALD, in the *Poultry*; and JAMES
BUCKLAND, in *Pater-noster-row*. MDCCXLIV.

God the Father of the People.

SERMON

DEATH

OF

THE REVEREND M^r STEPHEN



Who departed this life June 22, 1744.

PREACHED

IN YORK-STREET

BY SAMUEL WILSON.

LONDON:

Printed for Aaron Ward, in Little Britain,
John O'Neale, in the Strand, and James
Buckland, in Pall-mall.

PSALM LXXIII. 25, 26.

Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth: but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.

THESE Words evidently express the warm Breathings of a devout Mind, under a full Conviction of the infinite Excellency and Amiability of God, and highly inflamed with Love to him. Whether it is the Language of Royal David, the sweet Singer of *Israel*; or of Holy *Asaph*, the chief Musician, is matter of Debate among the Learned. Many of them incline to the latter Opinion, from what we read in the second Book of *Chronicles*, Chap. xxix. 30. viz. that *Hezekiah the King, and the Princes, commanded the Levites to sing Praise unto the Lord, with the words of David, and of Asaph the Seer.* Where it is observable that *Asaph* is called a *Seer*, or Prophet, and his Words, which are commanded to be sung in the public Worship of God, as well as those of *David*, may very probably refer to this, and the ten following Psalms which bear his Name.

2 *A S E R M O N on the Death*

BUT our Concern is rather with the Instruction, contain'd in the Psalm, than with the Penman of it: and upon a serious and careful Perusal, we shall soon discover, that he had been engaged in a grievous Conflict, with a very fore Temptation. He had been comparing the Prosperity of the Wicked, with the Afflictions and Troubles of the Godly; and at the first View, he was greatly at a loss to vindicate the Divine Wisdom, Righteousness, and Faithfulness in these Dispensations: yea, he was ready to *charge God foolishly*, and, in the Hurry of his Spirit, to conclude, that he had *cleansed his Heart in vain*, and in vain had *wash'd his Hands in Innocency*^a.

THUS he continued in great Perplexity and Distress; the Enquiry he made into these Things was *painfully* mysterious; till at length *he went into the Sanctuary*: there the Matter was soon set in a clear Light, and a Conviction of his Folly and Rashness deeply impress'd on his Spirit. These he acknowledges before God with the deepest Humiliation and Sorrow, and can hardly find Words sufficiently expressive of his own Ignorance and Baseness, in arraigning the *Fountain of Goodness*, who in all *suitable* Instances of Favour, never fails to distinguish those who *fear him*, from those who *fear him not*.

THE Psalm closes with several useful Lessons the Author of it had learned, from this grievous Exercise; which he leaves upon Record, for the Caution;

^a Verse 13.

of Mrs. REBEKAH STENNETT. 3

Caution, Instruction, and Comfort of the People of God, who shou'd at any time be in Danger from the same Temptation. Among these we have the Words of the Text; *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* As if he had said, “Ma-
 “ny, O Lord, are the Afflictions of the Righteous, and I have my Share of them; but
 “shall I complain? Is it not enough that I
 “have God for my *Father*, my *Friend*, and
 “my *Portion*? Let the Wicked prosper in the
 “things of Time, and enjoy the largest Afflu-
 “ence of earthly Comforts; they still have
 “but the *Creature*, they can have no more:
 “whilst I have the *Creator*; and in him have
 “all in all^b: and who wou'd think of quit-
 “ting the *Fountain*, for *broken Cisterns*^c?
 “Cease then, O my Soul, all thine ungrate-
 “ful Complaints: Let every hard Thought of
 “Providence be banish'd for ever. God is
 “righteous, wise, and holy, and he is *thy*
 “*God*; whom thou hast been assisted solemn-
 “ly to chuse; with whose gracious Presence
 “thou hast often been refreshed: and say, Is
 “there yet any in Heaven, or on Earth, thou
 “desirest like him? Thy *Flesh will*, and thy
 “*Heart may* fail thee; but think, O think
 “with holy Gratitude, and humble Joy, JE-
 “HOVAH, the *Strength of thy Heart*, faint-
 “eth not! He will uphold thee through Life,

B 2

“ stand

^b Col. iii. 11.

^c Jer. ii. 13.

4 A SERMON on the Death

“ stand by thee in a dying Hour, and be thy
“ enriching Portion when, as to thee, Time
“ shall be no more.”

THE excellent Mr. *Henry*, speaking of one of these Verses, observes, “ that there is scarcely a Verse in the whole Book of Psalms, more expressive of pious and devout Affections of a Soul to God : here it soars up to him, follows hard after him, and expresses the most entire Satisfaction and Complacency in him.”

FROM the Words, thus viewed in their Connection, I wou’d observe,

I. THAT the Great God is the most *suitable*, *all-sufficient*, and *only satisfying Portion* of his reasonable Creatures. None here below, none on Earth, no, nor in the World of Heaven, can make him completely happy but himself.

II. IT is a most amazing Instance of the Grace, and Condescension of God, that he gives any of the sinful Descendants of fallen Man, Reason to conclude, that he is *their God*, in an everlasting Covenant. It is with an Elevation of joyful Surprise, the Psalmist cries out, *He is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever*. Again,

III. WHEN a Believer is in the proper Exercise of Grace, there are warm and lively
Motions

Motions in his Heart towards God, in a way of Desire, Choice, and Preference. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.* And then,

IV, AND Lastly, The Saints great Support under Sicknes; or Trouble of any kind, and his chief Encouragement in the Views of Death, is the Assurance God has given him, that he is *the Strength of his Heart*, and will be his *Portion for ever.*

EACH of these I shall briefly consider, and then make some Application of the whole. And,

I. I WOULD observe, that the Great God, the Creator of all things, and he who form'd our Spirits, is the most *suitable, all-sufficient, and only satisfying Portion* of his reasonable Creatures.

THIS, in a degree, is evident from the Light of Nature; so that many of the wiser Heathens have wrote largely, and well on the Subject. And one would think, that whoever closely considers that *Part* of Man which distinguishes him from the Brutes, the *Soul*, with its several Powers or Faculties, taking into his View all in the Creature, which can be supposed to promise Satisfaction, must be convinc'd, that God is the supreme Good, and that

6 *A S E R M O N on the Death*

that if ever a thinking, immortal Spirit is happy, it must be in the Favour, and Fellowship of the *Father of Spirits*.

THE avaritious Wretch indeed cries out, Give me Gold. Wealth is his God, and *Mammon* the Good he is pursuing. Now admit his Desire is granted; his Bags are daily swelling, and his Store largely increased: Is he satisfied? He may say, *Soul, take thine Ease, eat, drink, and be merry, thou hast Goods laid up for many Years*^d: but then perhaps the very Thoughts of his Riches will not suffer him to sleep: however, the largest Abundance cannot give him Ease from a single Pain, nor remove the least Degree of Sickness, much less obtain the Pardon of his Transgressions, and that Peace of Conscience, which is essential to Blessedness. His Riches may furnish him with the Necessaries, and Conveniences of Life; but not with a Capacity of enjoying them: for *Appetite, Relish, and Contentment* are not to be bought with Money. He may think he has many Friends, and be surrounded with a Number of Flatterers: but a guilty Conscience stabs all his Joy, by representing an avenging God his Enemy. And what will all his Treasure signify in a dying Hour? Will it ward off the dreadful Stroke, or bribe the King of Terrors to delay it one Moment? No! he must die, and leave his Wealth behind him: and so far will it be from *profiting him in the day of Wrath*, that the Remembrance of it, and his insatiable Thirst after

^d Luke xii. 19.

it, will render his Misery more exquisitely painful, when he lifts up his Eyes in Hell, stripp'd of all, and doom'd to everlasting Torments.

THE *Man of Pleasure* is wild after sensual Gratifications. These he calls his Happiness. But surely there is not a more miserable Creature in our World, than he who is *wearying himself for Vanity*, constantly pursuing an airy Dream, and always sure to meet with Disappointment. How is he oblig'd continually to shift Place, and Company! change his Diversions, and Amusements! Now this palls, and the other displeases: He is still eagerly reaching after something new; nor does he half enjoy the Pleasures, he is likely to pay so dear for at last. If at any time he is a little sober and thoughtful, the bitter Stings of an accusing Conscience wofully harrahs him; and in the Article of Death, if sensible, the Remembrance of his past Madness, as a *Lover of Pleasure more than a Lover of God^e*, strikes him through with inexpressible Horror.

THE *Ambitious Man* may pride himself in the Distinction of his Family; the Number and Dignity of his Titles; the Favour of his Prince, and the Throng of his Levee; but he is always dissatisfied: He is either seeking, if possible, to rise higher, or afraid of losing what he has attained. And shall we call that Happiness, which depends on the Humour of a changeable Creature, or the Breath of the Multitude: and which may be interrupted by the Carelessness of
a Ser-

8 A SERMON on the Death

a Servant, or the Envy of a Companion? *Haman*, one would have thought, might have enjoyed himself, and overlooked the Neglect of poor *Mordecai*; but he could neither eat nor sleep, his haughty Spirit found no Rest, till he had contrived, and, as he hop'd, secur'd a suitable Revenge. An *aspiring, proud, imperious* Spirit is absolutely inconsistent with true Happiness. But indeed where Grace and Honour meet, the good Man, how illustrious soever by Birth or Title, looks upon himself to be more enobled by being a Member of God's Family, an *Heir of God, and a joint Heir with Christ*^f, than if he cou'd trace his Descent from the greatest Heroes, or the most Renowned among the Princes of this World. Death puts all upon a Level; and the Wicked of the greatest Name die as truly accursed, as the meanest of their ungodly Subjects.

A *Man of Learning*, or one of a studious inquiring Mind, is certainly in a fairer Way for Satisfaction, than either of these; but after all his Researches and Attainments, if he lives without God, if he is a Stranger to an holy and spiritual Communion with him, he must needs be miserable. Science in every Branch has its Entertainment, but cannot fill the Soul: nor will the greatest Stock of human Knowledge support the Mind under the Fears of Divine Wrath, or prepare the Man to meet his Judge. God has wisely inscribed *Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit*, on every thing short of himself; And

^f Rom. viii. 17.

And whoever is *far from him*, let his other Circumstances be what they will, *must necessarily perish* g. He is the only Portion of the Soul; and there is enough in him to satisfy it.

WHAT an Heaven of Joy breaks in upon the good Man, when his God lifts up the Light of his Countenance upon him, and sheds abroad his Love in his Heart? When he hears him pronounce his Pardon, saying, *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy Transgressions, and will not remember thy Sins* h? This removes his painful Fears, about the Consequence of Guilt, and gives him Confidence in the Thought of appearing before his Maker. He knows, and is ready, with Shame and Confusion, to acknowledge, he has sinned against Heaven, and before God; that he has deserved to be banish'd his Presence, and to be cast into Hell; but when he is pleas'd to assure him, *there is Forgiveness with him*, and that he will not impute his Transgressions unto him, he feels the Sweetness of the Mercy in his Soul; and can say with holy Triumph, *In thy Favour is Life* i, and *thy Loving-kindness is better than Life* k. And surely he must be ascertain'd of all needful Good, who has a gracious God continually to provide for him. David's Conclusion is built upon the strongest Premises; "*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want* l. *My Bread shall be given me, and my Water shall be sure* m, in a natural and a spiritual Sense both:

C

" If

g Psal. lxxiii. 27.

k Psal. lxiii. 3.

h Isa. xliii. 25.

l Psal. xxiii. 1.

i Psal. xxx. 5.

m Isa. xxxiii. 16.

TO A SERMON on the Death

“ If my heavenly Father sees it best, I shou’d
 “ have but a little of this World, he can easi-
 “ ly sweeten it with his Presence, and make
 “ the plainest Fare, a richer Entertainment,
 “ than all the Dainties of the Ungodly : If he
 “ gives me more, he can sanctify it to my
 “ Good, and keep me from the Abuse of it.
 “ Under his Protection I am secure in the
 “ midst of Dangers, and led by his Conduct I
 “ cannot err. A Smile from him will make
 “ Death welcome, and in his blissful Presence
 “ I shall find a *Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures*
 “ *for evermore* ⁿ.

BUT, alas, however right this Reasoning is,
 yet such is the remaining Power of Corruption
 in good Men themselves, that even they are too
 apt to *seek the Living among the Dead*, and to
 disgrace their high Privileges and Attainments
 by a too vigorous Pursuit after the things of
 Sense and Time : so that the best among us
 may perhaps have Reason to pause a little here,
 and say within himself, “ Poor, wandering,
 “ mistaken Heart of mine, whither art thou
 “ going ? What art thou ever and anon reach-
 “ ing after ? Had God gratified thee in all thy
 “ vain Desires, and with-held himself from
 “ thee, how miserable had thy Condition been
 “ long ago ? Wou’d the largest Share of Ri-
 “ ches, Pleasures, or Honours, or the greatest
 “ Proficiency in learned Accomplishments,
 “ have ever been able to yield thee so much
 “ true Delight, as a believing Meditation on
 “ the

of Mrs. REBEKAH STENNETT. II

“ the Grace of the Covenant, and of thy own
“ Interest in it, or a sweet Survey of the pre-
“ cious Promises of the Gospel, and a com-
“ fortable and well grounded View of thy own
“ Title to them? What Joy like that of Com-
“ munion with God? What Joy of this kind
“ hast not thou, thro’ Grace, sometimes concei-
“ ved? And yet, alas, how much has he been
“ neglected and forgotten by thee! Let it from
“ this Day be engraven upon my Heart, as a
“ Maxim of standing Use for my Instruction,
“ and Caution, that *every Bounty of Provi-*
“ *dence, and all creature Comforts, when san-*
“ *ctified, are great and undeserved Favours;*
“ *but God only is the Portion of my Soul.*”
Which leads me to observe,

II. THAT it is a wonderful Instance of the Grace, and Condescension of God, that he shou’d give any of the sinful Descendants of a fallen and rebellious Creature, Reason to conclude, that he is *their* God, in an everlasting Covenant. The Psalmist appealing to God, with joyful Appropriation, calls him *his* Strength, and *his* Portion for ever.

THE infinite Distance there is between *the High and Lofty One, who inhabits Eternity*^o; and the most excellent and glorious of his Creatures, accounts for the Observation of the sacred Penman, *That he humbles himself to behold*

12 A SERMON on the Death

the things done in Heaven P. Every Communion of Light, and Favour, to the brightest Seraph attending his Throne, is a Stoop in this glorious Sovereign; who owes his Creatures nothing, nor can possibly be laid under the Shadow of an Obligation. *What then is Man, that he shou'd be mindful of him, or the Son of Man, that he shou'd visit him^a?* What is a *Worm* taken out of the Dust, whose Date is but of Yesterday, and who is crush'd before the Moth^r? A *sinful Worm*, who has most traiterously rebell'd against his Maker; whose first Father sinn'd, and who himself naturally *drinks in Iniquity like Water^s*? Will *that* God, in whose Sight the Heavens are not clean, and who charges his Angels with Folly^t, vouchsafe so much as to look on him? When in his Blood, cast forth, to the loathing of his Person^u, shall infinite Mercy pity, and adorable Sovereignty say unto him, Live? To spare him, and not to cut him off, and send him down to the Regions of everlasting Misery, as he most justly deserved, was more than could have been expected, especially if we attend to the righteous Severity of God to the fallen Angels: but to take him into his Family, to make him his Child, to declare himself *his Father* and *his God*, we may well say, Wonder, O Heavens, and be amaz'd, O Earth! — And so much the more, if we consider the Expence God has been at,

P Psal cxiii. 6.

f Job xv. 16.

a Psal. viii. 4.

t Job iv. 18.

r Job iv. 19.

u Ezek. xvi. 6.

at, to bring about this astonishing Design of Grace and Love: His eternal and well-beloved Son is given out of his Bosom, to take the human Nature, and after a Life of the most surprising Humiliation, must die the accursed Death of the Cross: in consequence of which, the Holy Ghost is sent into the Heart, to renew and sanctify it, that nothing should hinder, in a way honourable to the divine Perfections, the compleat Salvation, and everlasting Happiness of the poor Sinner.

AND then, such are the Remains of Sin and Corruption, and so manifold the Imperfections found with the best of God's Children, after being taken into his Family, that the Wonder is no less, that God should at any time familiarly converse with them, and graciously acquaint them with his unchangeable Love to them, and their indissoluble Relation to him. Had he reserved this for the World of Light and Vision, where the Spirit is deliver'd from all Defilement, made perfect in Knowledge and Purity, and out of the Danger of any Temptation, or Defection; and in this imperfect State had he only given the Knowledge of a *Possibility* or *Peradventure* of it, it would have been an unspeakable Favour; but, O the Riches of divine Grace! How marvellous and endearing! that he should take one of his Children after another, and as it were leading them by the Hand, should bring them into the Secret of his Presence, unvail his Face, and seal home the Impressions of his Love, saying, *Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismay'd,*
for

14 A SERMON on the Death

for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness^w: I am thine; call every Perfection, Promise, Ordinance, and Providence thine: I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee^x; I rest in my Love towards thee^y; will guide thee with my Counsel, and afterward receive thee to Glory! This is Grace indeed! Goodness worthy of a God whose Name is gracious and merciful, and whose Nature is Love!

THAT some Saints have had most certain and comfortable Assurances of God's special Love, is evident from Scripture; *Abraham* could conclude no less, when God said to him, *I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward^a: David*, with holy Triumph, says, *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation^b: Daniel* was told by an Angel from Heaven, he was a *Man greatly beloved of God^c: And the Apostle Paul* could say, speaking of *Christ*, *who loved me, and gave himself for me^d.*

IF it is said, these were extraordinary Persons, and the Manifestations peculiar and miraculous; it must be allow'd, in the present Day, we are not to expect that God should speak to us immediately from Heaven, or look for an Angel to bring us an Account that our Names are enrolled in the Book of Life; but our heavenly Father has distinctly wrote out in his Word,

^w Isa. xli. 10.

^x Heb. xiii. 5.

^y Zeph. iii. 17.

^a Gen. xv. 1.

^b Psal. xxvii. 1.

^c Dan. x. 11.

^d Gal. ii. 19.

Word, the Evidences we are to seek after; such as *Repentance unto Life*, consisting in a hearty, ingenuous Sorrow for Sin, an Abhorrence of it, and Departure from it; *Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, expressed in our *fleeing for Refuge to lay hold on him*; the great *Hope set before us*; a *filial Fear of God*, and *supreme Love to him*; with a Desire, and Endeavour to *walk in all his Ordinances and Commandments blameless*. And lest the humble Christian should be always fluctuating between Hope and Fear, it is the great Office of the Spirit to witness to his own Work; and this he does, sometimes so sweetly, and powerfully, that the Children of God can see the Image of their Father in a measure drawn out upon them, *know whom they have believed*^e, and *rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*^f.

BESIDES which, there are some special Seasons, in which they more immediately see the reconcil'd Face of God; he comes to them in a Promise, fills an Ordinance, and instructs them by a Providence, graciously whispering his Love in all, saying, *I am thine, and thou art mine*; behold I have graven thee on my Heart, and on the Palms of my Hands^g, thou art dear to me as the Apple of mine Eye^h, no Weapon form'd against thee shall prosper; and every Tongue which rises up against thee in Judgment thou shalt condemnⁱ. O what a Stoop is this? Will God in

very

^e 2 Tim. i. 12.

^h Deut. ii. 10.

^f 1 Pet. i. 8.

^g Isa. liv, 17.

ⁱ Isa. xlix. 16.

16 A SERMON on the Death

very *Deed* thus dwell with Men on this Earth^k? shall any of them be able comfortably to say, *Truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*^l? Let us fall down before the Lord, and with Hearts full of Gratitude, cry out, *Behold, what manner of Love is this? O the Height, and Depth, the Length and Breadth* of this Grace, which is incomprehensible, and *passeth all Knowledge!* We go on to observe,

III. THAT when the Believer is in the proper lively Exercise of Grace, there will be some warm and active Motions in his Soul towards God, in a way of Desire, Choice, and Preference; *Whom, says the holy Psalmist, have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee?*

“ I HAVE, as if he had said, my Relations,
 “ Friends, and Interests, nor am I insensible
 “ of the Advantages attending them; but God
 “ is infinitely beyond them all. None like
 “ him, in my View; none to be compar’d
 “ with him, in my Love; *None*, absolutely
 “ *none*. No Persons, Possessions, Honours,
 “ or Pleasures to be regarded in Comparison
 “ of him, or in Competition with him: all
 “ are tasteless without him, and chearfully to
 “ be quitted for him.”

I DON'T

^k 1 Kings viii. 27.

^l 1 John i. 3.

I DON'T say the Christian always feels the same Warmth in his Desires after God, or Zeal in his Affection for him : but when Grace is in its proper Exercise, he can say with *David*, *As the Hart panteth after the Water Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : When shall I come and appear before God^m ?* And if at any time, his Desires, through Temptation or Corruption, run low, the Bias of his Mind is still for God : here his Judgment is fix'd, nor would he go back from the Choice he has been enabled to make of God for his *Portion*, for ten thousand Worlds. His Determination, in the Strength of Grace, is, if call'd to it by Providence, to give up Life, with all its dearest Interests for his Glory, whose he is, and whom he desires above all to love and serve.

THE good Man is much affected with his present Mercies, he heartily blesses God for Food, and Raiment, for Health, and for Protection, for all the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life : If Grace is given to others, and especially to those for whom he has a natural and a tender Regard, he feels the Mercy diffuse a sacred Joy in his own Spirit : He sets a high Value on the Communion he has with the Saints, and *their Feet are beautiful on the Mountains who bring him the good Tidings of Salvationⁿ*. He loves *the Habitation of God's House, and the Place where his Honour dwells^o*; for

D

he

^m Ps. xlii. 1, 2.

ⁿ Isa. lii. 2.

^o Ps. xxvi. 8.

18 A SERMON on the Death

he finds Wisdom's *Ways are Ways of Pleasantness*, and all her *Paths are Peace*^P: But still, there is *none on Earth* he desires, as he desires his God. Some of these may have an instrumental Influence on his outward Profit and Advantage, and others of them on his spiritual Improvement and Comfort; and the Spirit of God may sanctify them all to his Benefit here, and render them conducive to his better Interests hereafter: but still God only can satisfy the Desires of his immortal Soul.

NAY, in Heaven itself there are none he desires so much as God, nor would all the other Enjoyments there, content him, were his God absent. To converse familiarly with Saints and Angels, in the Regions of Light and Glory, must be highly entertaining to sanctified Minds; but then it is so, as they are mutually imparting their exalted Apprehensions of the divine Perfections. God is the constant Theme of their Meditations, and his Glory, *essential or manifestative*, the great Subject of their Conversation. Heaven itself, would be no Heaven to a Child of God, if his Father were not there: so that the Psalmist speaks in the Text the common Language of the whole Family, when in a proper Frame. If they differ in other Respects here, yet still in this they all agree, and in holy Aspirations after God, cry out with one Voice, *Whom have we in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that we desire besides thee.* Which brings on our last Remark, viz.

IV. That

IV. THAT the great Support of a Christian; under Sickness, or Trouble of any kind; and his chief Encouragement in the Views of Death, is an Assurance from God, that he will be *the Strength of his Heart, and his Portion for ever; My Flesh and my Heart faileth, but God is the Strength of my Heart and my Portion for ever.*

“ MY *Flesh*, or bodily Strength, may very
 “ soon, but certainly will in the End *fail* me.
 “ Pining Sickness may consume my *Flesh*, or
 “ racking Pain reduce my Strength long be-
 “ fore I reach to old Age; however, it must
 “ wither and perish then. *My Heart* may
 “ *fail* me too, my Judgment, Memory, and
 “ all my Faculties be for a time shatter’d, and
 “ if not quite lost, be greatly impair’d: my
 “ Courage and Resolution, my Comfort and
 “ my Joy, may in a great measure sink and de-
 “ cay, so that I may not find my Head,
 “ Heart or Hands as formerly: but if God is
 “ *the Strength of my Heart*, he will never fail
 “ me: his everlasting Arm shall be underneath
 “ me: he will kindly suit his Help to my
 “ Circumstances, will sustain and uphold me,
 “ and carry me thro’ all my Difficulties. And
 “ if he *weakens my Strength in the Way*¹, in
 “ order to bring me to Death and the Grave,
 “ he will be with me in both, securing, if not
 “ enlightening my Passage, and sanctifying the

D 2

“ Grave

¹ Psal. cii. 23.

20 A SERMON on the Death

“ Grave as the Repository of my Dust, till the
“ Morning of the Resurrection.”

IT is observable, that the Psalmist speaks in the present Tense, he *is* the Strength of my Heart; not only he *has been* so, and I trust he *will be* so, but as one, now sensible of his sustaining Arm, *he is* the Strength of my Heart: or as it is in the Original, the *Rock* of my Heart.

“ Here my Soul fixes, under this Shadow I
“ abide: his Wisdom, Power, Grace and
“ Faithfulness, made over to me in an ever-
“ lasting Covenant, make me easy in the Pro-
“ spect of the Decays of Nature, and embol-
“ den me to look on Death and the Grave
“ without desponding Fear, or slavish Anxie-
“ ty.”

HE says nothing particularly as to God’s Concern about his *Flesh*; well knowing that, by the Decree of Heaven, it must return to the Dust from which it was taken: but all was compriz’d in this, “ *He is the Strength of my Heart*, and as such will take care of me, and every Part of me; nor can I fail of any Degree of Blessedness, if *He is my Portion for ever.*” *My Portion for ever!* Every Word surely has the sweetest Emphasis; “ *He is*: what is he? He is the Great, the Glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth, the God whose Presence makes an Heaven for Angels; who has infinite, unsearchable, and never to be exhausted Treasures of Glory: He is a *Portion*, that is a Good equal to the Desires, and suited to the Appetite of an
“ immortal,

of Mrs. REBEKAH STENNETT. 21

“ immortal, renewed Mind: He is *my Portion*,
“ he hath made over himself to me, saying, *I*
“ *am thy God*^r; all that I am, and all that I
“ have is thine: And to compleat the Mercy,
“ He is my Portion *for ever*. The Wicked,
“ who prosper in this World, have *their Por-*
“ *tion*^s; but is it for ever? A few Years run
“ out, and where are they? Gone out of our
“ World, and their Substance in other Hands:
“ But *my Portion* is not like theirs; I have a
“ more noble satisfying Good, and I have this
“ Good *for ever*. My Soul is immortal, and
“ *my Portion*, will never fail.” And surely
when Faith is assisted to take up this Conclufi-
on, upon Scripture Evidence, tho’ *Flesh and*
Heart fail, the Believer may, and ought to re-
joice in God, who is the *Strength of his Heart*,
and his *Portion for ever*.

HAVING thus endeavour’d to give you the
Sense of the Words, and offered these brief Re-
marks upon them, as the Time allotted me
would permit, I proceed to make some Appli-
cation. And then,

1. How weak a Part do those Persons
act, who take up with any thing short of
God for their Portion? Poor mistaken Crea-
tures! to please and satisfy themselves with the
Shadow, and neglect the Substance. What
they call *Gain*, will in the End appear to be
meer *Vanity and Emptiness*, with the stinging
Reflection,

† Isa. xli. 10.

• Psal. xvii. 14.

22 A SERMON on the Death

Reflection, that they have miss'd of God, the chief Good, and plunged themselves into an Abyſs of Miſery, and that for ever. In vain do they ſeek for Happineſs in the Creature, and much leſs in criminal Gratifications. Conſcience, unleſs ſear'd, muſt needs tell them, that they are *feeding on Aſhes*, that a *deceived Heart hath turned them aſide*, and that *they have a Lye in their right Hands*. They may, for a time indeed, *compaſs themſelves about with Sparks, walk in the Light of their Fire, and in the Sparks that they have kindled*; but *this ſhall they have of the Hand of the Lord, in the End ſhall they lie down in Sorrow*. Conſider, the Lord grant you may conſider this, *ye that forget God, leſt he tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver* ^u! There is no Medium; if God is not your *Portion*, Hell muſt: and how will you *dwell with everlaſting Burnings* ^w! And then,

2. WHAT little Reason have good Men to envy the Proſperity of the Wicked? Read this Pſalm carefully, and ſay, would you change Condition with them? Would you have their guilty Reflections for all their ill-gotten Wealth, their empty Honours, and their other mean and brutal Gratifications? At preſent they may be eaſy, and chearful; but it is the Effect of a fatal Security. They are now *in ſlippery Places*, but will ſoon be *brought down into Deſtruction*;

^{*} Iſa. xlv. 20. [†] Chap. l. 11. ^u Pſalm l. 22. ^w Iſa. xxxiii. 14.

struction *; yea, sometimes, *how are they brought into Desolation, as in a Moment? They are utterly consumed with Terrors* †. But were their Sins to die with them, and were there no After-reckoning for their Transgressions; what are all their Joys united together, if compared with this one most substantial and delightful Reflection, that *God is your Portion*? Consider a little, all you that fear and love God, *what your God is*, what he has *done* for you already: read his exceeding great and precious Promises, and take such a View, tho' a distant one, as they will afford you of the Glories of the upper World, which are reserved and prepared for you; and then envy them if you can. You are the blessed of the Lord, his Heart is towards you, and his Eye ever upon you: He has given you his Son, his Spirit, his Covenant, and if you have no more, is not this a goodly Heritage? Well might the Psalmist say, when convinced of his Negligence in this respect, *So foolish was I, and ignorant, I was as a Beast before thee* ‡. It is enough, Saints, that you are *continually with your God*; that he *holds you by the right Hand* §; that he *will guide you by his Counsel, and afterwards receive you to Glory*. Again,

3. HAVE we not Reason, on comparing the Psalmist's Experience with our own, to be deeply humbled for the Coolness of our Love

to

* Psal. lv. 23. † Psal. lxxiii. 19. ‡ Ver. 22. § Ver. 23.

24 A SERMON on the Death

to God? How feeble are our Desires after him? how wavering our Dependance upon him? and how languid and inconstant our Delight in him? Can we say with the same holy Fervour, *Whom have we in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth that we desire besides thee?* Time was, I hope, when we comfortably felt something of this Frame: but have we not *left our first Love*^b? God is always the same, and our Obligations to him are continually increasing. O the dreadful Treachery of our Hearts! What poor Returns do we make him! The Lord grant we may *consider whence we are fallen, and repent, and do our first Works*^c. The Assurance he has given us, that he will *be the Strength of our Hearts, and our Portion for ever*, is a most powerful Motive to attract our Souls, and increase our Delight in him. Let us then ascend by Faith where God is; let us draw near his Throne; let us survey his Glory, and behold the Triumphs of his Love in the Face of the great Redeemer; and this View will surely melt our Souls into such a Temper, that we shall humbly own our broken Vows and Wanderings from him, with a Contrition suitable to our Ingratitude and Folly: Let us offer up our most fervent Supplications, through the kind Hand of this powerful Intercessor, that the astonishing Love, by which we are distinguished, may, through the Influence of the blessed Spirit, draw out the warmest Desires of
our

^b Rev. ii 4.

^c Ver. 5.

our Souls after God, unite our Hearts more effectually to him; and that our Faith and Love may be productive of a growing Improvement in Holiness, and universal Conformity to the divine Will. And, to which I will add,

4. If the Believer, at such a Distance, and attended with so many Disadvantages, when in a good Frame, can lay hold on such Comfort, and take up such Resolutions as these; with what Improvement of Wonder and Joy, will he join the *Hallelujah's* of the Saints above, when he shall be admitted into the immediate Presence of God, and shall see him *Face to Face*? — Now the great Question often returns, *Is he mine*? And in proportion to the Evidence that he is so, the Heart rejoices: But when he comes to stand before the Throne, and God shall make known his Love in the World of Glory, with what Transports will he cry out, *He is my Portion! This God is my God, and will be so for ever and ever!*

SUCH was the Faith and Hope, on this Side the Grave, and such no doubt is the Triumph now, of our honoured Friend Mrs. *Rebekah Stennett*, the late excellent Consort of your Reverend Pastor, whose Life, from her Conversion to her Death, was a Transcript of our Text, in a Way of Desire and Delight, and attended with very distinguishing Intimations from her heavenly Father, that he was *the Strength of her Heart*, and would be her *Portion for ever*.

26 *A SERMON on the Death*

I STAND not here to paint the Sepulchres of the Dead: what we say, on these Occasions, can neither add to the Blessedness of the Spirits of the Just, already made perfect; nor can any Detraction soil their Glory, or interrupt their Felicity. But where great Grace has been bestow'd, it should be acknowledg'd, and exemplary Virtue should be recorded for public Imitation.

AND it is but little, very little I can do, to embalm the Memory of this precious Saint. Those who knew her, need not be told she was a most extraordinary Person in every Relation; distinguished above most, for her regular and undissembled Piety, her great Tenderness of Conscience, her most exact and holy Walk, together with a steady Adherence to the great Truths of the Gospel, and a zealous Concern for the Glory of God, and the Good of all about her.——But to be more particular,

SHE very justly esteem'd it her greater Honour to be descended from Parents distinguished for Piety and Religion, than the Claim they had of a Descent, on both Sides, from Families of very eminent Rank in the Country where they liv'd. The Memory of her pious and excellent Father, Mr. *Nathanael Morgan*, of *Uske* Castle in the County of *Monmouth*, will not soon be lost among the Friends of vital Religion in that Country: nor will his Charity to his poor and ignorant Neighbours be easily forgot; a Charity which was extended not only to their outward Support, but to the Benefit of
their

of Mrs. REBEKAH STENNETT. 27

their precious and immortal Souls, by his free and affectionate Labours in the Gospel among them. Her Mother, who was the Daughter of Captain *Samuel Jones*, of the *Grange* in the same County, inherited a rich Share of the Graces which so eminently shone in that worthy Gentleman.

NOR would I so much as mention the Blessings of Nature, with which the Deceas'd was very remarkably favour'd, but to observe, that few of her Sex who have been so adorn'd, have so early got such a Victory over the Snares, to which such Advantages usually expose them.

THE pious Instructions and holy Examples of her Parents were in such a manner bless'd, as to make very early Impressions on her tender Mind; so that (as appears by an Account found among her Papers) she fell under great Convictions at ten Years of Age; and these were renew'd and increas'd by the affecting Loss of her dear Mother, who departed this Life, about three Years after, in a very triumphant manner. A little before her Dissolution, it seems, she call'd her Children round her, and, in a most solemn manner, made them severally promise, as they should answer it before the Tribunal of the great God, that they would be found in his Ways. "Let them be found there," said she, "and God will call them in due Time, if they belong to him."

28 *A SERMON on the Death*

SHE was greatly impress'd with this mournful Providence, and awful Charge; but she apprehended the effectual Change was not wrought upon her, till she came under the Sound of an awakening Sermon, from *Acts* xxvi. 28. This was in the Bloom of Youth, at the Age of sixteen, while she was at School at *Bristol*. She soon after put on a public Profession; and, as her Faith was founded on the pure Principles of divine Grace, and in an humble Sense of her own Unworthiness and Weakness; so, by the Help of the same Grace, she maintain'd the Honour and Beauty of her Profession, through all the Frowns and Flatteries of a vain World, and the too general Decay of vital Religion, to the End of her Life.

SHE was very exemplary in all her Relations, a dutiful Daughter, a most affectionate and obliging Wife, and a tender Mother. As the Wife of a Minister, she studied closely this Character, as it is recommended in the Scriptures; and putting it diligently into Practice, she contributed the most constant and kind Assistance and Comfort to her Husband, in all the Difficulties of his Station. And though she bore a zealous and invariable Testimony, in this declining Day, to the great Doctrines of the Gospel of Grace, and against Sin in every Shape; yet, during that Relation, for near thirty Years, it is not remember'd that she ever gave a remarkable Offence to any one; while, at the same time, she enjoy'd the Blessings of the poor and the afflicted, as the constant Reward of her

her bountiful Hand, and her tender and sympathizing Heart.

In the Character of a Mother she also excell'd most of her Sex, training up her Children in the Nurture of the Lord, under her own Eye, always prudently uniting her Authority and Tenderness together; and so blending her religious Counsels with those that were necessary for their Usefulness in civil Life, and following all with her fervent Prayers, and her holy Example, as, through the great Mercy of God, was attended with no small Success on their Minds. And though she had eleven Children in thirteen Years, yet she was not observed to abate at all, in the industrious and wise Oeconomy of her Family Affairs, till she was rendred incapable of it by her last Illness. She all along entertained such just and habitual Sentiments of the Emptiness of this vain World, that she used to say, she sought not the great things of it for her Children, but what she had constantly, and almost alone, in her View, was their Usefulness and their Salvation.

HER Religion was without Affectation, calm and uniform; and though without Noise and Shew, yet how closely she walked with God appeared by the whole Course of her Conversation. Nor is every thing lost to her Family that pass'd in the Secrecy of her beloved Retirements, she having left such Memoirs behind her, of the devout and sweet Transactions of those solemn Seasons, which she frequently set apart for intimate Converse with God, and her
own

30 . *A SERMON on the Death*

own Soul, as will be lasting Testimonies of that constant Correspondence she maintain'd with Heaven, and, it is to be hoped, of great Service to her mournful Family.

I SHALL give you an Extract or two of those Papers, by which you will be able to form the best Judgment of the Temper of her Mind; and to what good Purposes those blessed Retirements were employ'd. On these Seasons, she used in the most solemn Manner to humble her Soul before God, to recognize her special Obligations to Heaven, to examine her State and Frame, and to renew her Vows, and lay her Heart under fresh Engagements to the Lord. The following are some of the holy Resolutions which, on these Occasions, she took up, and the Rules she laid down for her Conduct.

——“ I HAVE propos'd, says she, and, in
 “ the divine Strength, I have resolv'd, to ab-
 “ hor all Sin, to watch carefully against the
 “ first Motions of it in my deceitful Heart, to
 “ make it my Study and Prayer, to know when
 “ I am tempted, and never to parley with
 “ Temptation, but resolutely to oppose, and,
 “ in divine Strength, to conquer it. — I would
 “ learn chearfully to deny myself, and to
 “ have every Day less Expectation from Things
 “ below.——I would watch over the Door of
 “ my Lips, that I may utter nothing with my
 “ Tongue, but what has been first well con-
 “ sider'd in my Heart.——I would be tempe-

“ rate in all Things, and constantly labour to sub-
“ due Pride and Passion.—I would walk with an
“ holy Awe of God all the Day long; *tenderly*,
“ so as not to grieve the Holy Spirit, and at the
“ same time, I would run *cheerfully* the Way of
“ his Commandments.—Faith is the Life of the
“ Soul, and I would *live by Faith*. O may
“ I always watch and pray against Unbelief!
“ — I would learn an entire Submission to
“ the divine Will in all Things, that *Patience*
“ may *have its perfect Work*, and that nothing
“ may be a Burden to me but Sin.—I would
“ have such a Zeal for God’s Glory, as should
“ engage me to bear a faithful Testimony for
“ him, and the despised Truths of the Gospel,
“ on all Occasions; and at the same time, I
“ would be possess’d of great Meekness and
“ Lowliness of Mind, *esteeming* every one of
“ God’s People *better than myself*, forgiving all
“ Injuries I receive for the Sake of Christ, who
“ hath forgiven me, loving others as he hath
“ loved the Church, and *putting on, as holy*
“ *and beloved of Christ, Bowels of Compassion*
“ *and Tenderness* to all, but especially to those
“ that bear the Image of Christ, in all their
“ Infirmities, Temptations, and Distresses.—
“ I would labour to be more useful in Conver-
“ sation, and that I might converse more freely
“ about the Things of God.—I would be so
“ fill’d with heavenly Treasure, that the World
“ might have no Room in my Heart, that I
“ might never have any distressing Thought a-
“ bout it. O that the Blessings of it may be
“ sweet

32 A SERMON on the Death

“ sweet to me, through my dear *Jesus*, and not
 “ one Corruption be nourish’d by them!—O
 “ that the Word of God may not be a sealed
 “ Book to me! that all the divine Ordinances
 “ may delight and nourish my Soul; that
 “ I may hunger and thirst after them, and not
 “ only come to the Table of the Lord in Obe-
 “ dience to his Command, but indeed *discern*
 “ *the Lord’s Body there!*——I would have my
 “ dear Family much upon my Heart before
 “ God. —— O that all the Souls in it, both
 “ Children and Servants, may be the Lord’s,
 “ and may be converted to him in the Days of
 “ their Youth! I would, in the Strength of
 “ Christ, daily exert my poor Endeavours after
 “ this great Blessing: and may I have Wisdom
 “ from above to manage my Family aright, in
 “ all Respects, so that I may be made a Bless-
 “ ing to every one in it, and that they may be
 “ all made Blessings to me; that Harmony
 “ and Order may always dwell among us, that
 “ our Comforts may daily grow, that the
 “ Beauty of the Lord may be upon us, and
 “ that we may have spiritual Joy all the Day
 “ long!——I would also, more solicitously and
 “ constantly desire the Prosperity and Advance-
 “ ment of God’s Glory, and Christ’s Kingdom,
 “ and the Welfare of all round about me; that
 “ Sinners might be more abundantly converted,
 “ the Church abound with Gifts and Graces,
 “ and that Peace, and Love, and Union might
 “ be more promoted among Christians all over
 “ the Earth; that more Holiness might be shed
 “ abroad

“ abroad among God’s People, and then surely
 “ there would be, what I most earnestly
 “ long for, more Comfort, more spiritual
 “ Chearfulness among them. — I would be
 “ much in Prayer, I would *watch* unto
 “ it. — I would be a strict Observer of Provi-
 “ dence with respect to myself, my Family,
 “ the Church, and the World. — And tho’
 “ my Heart bleeds, because many fall daily
 “ from *the Truth as it is in Jesus*, in these sad
 “ Times, yet may I, under this Consideration,
 “ grow stronger in Faith, and may my Hope
 “ be as an *Anchor cast within the Vail*, as I
 “ see the Word of God is daily hereby fulfil-
 “ ling. — I would not have the Signs of the
 “ Times steal by me without my Observation.
 “ — May I live in longing Expectation of
 “ the glorious Coming and Kingdom of the
 “ Lord *Jesus Christ*. — And, in this Frame of
 “ Mind, may Death grow every Day more fa-
 “ miliar to me, and may I never be in *Bon-*
 “ *dage thro’ the Fear of it, &c.*”

SUCH were the Purposes and Breathings of
 her pious Soul; and, when under some Distress
 of Mind, she writes thus, — “ Lord, why am
 “ I thus sad? thus dejected in Spirit? Alas,
 “ what has Sin done! O when shall I put off
 “ the Body of this Death! Blessed be God that
 “ I groan under it. I have too often sought
 “ *the living among the dead*; but I find no-
 “ thing here below can satisfy my longing Soul.
 “ Lord, I come to thee, *if I perish, I will perish*
 F “ at

34 A SERMON on the Death

“ *at thy Feet.—Lord, what wait I for? my Hope*
 “ *is in thee.*——It is in thyself only that I can
 “ find solid Comfort. —— I give myself up to
 “ thee: Thou, Lord, shalt be my God, my
 “ Portion, and my all: from this Day forth
 “ my Soul shall follow hard after thee, and
 “ *thy right Hand shall uphold me; thou shalt*
 “ *guide me by thy Counsel, and afterwards re-*
 “ *ceive me to Glory.*” Again,

“ I HAVE long labour’d under a dead and
 “ stupid Frame, and great Barrenness of Mind
 “ under the blessed Means; this is the Disease
 “ of the Day that cleaveth close to most Pro-
 “ fessors. Lord, what shall I do? *my Eyes are*
 “ *up unto thee, and my Expectation is from thee.*
 “ O give me some Assurance, that I shall per-
 “ sever in thy ways, and thou shalt have all
 “ the Glory of it ! ”

AND at another time——“ I have had ma-
 “ ny fore Trials of late of various Kinds, I have
 “ gone sighing and groaning under the Pressure
 “ of more Unbelief than ever; it makes me
 “ stoop and go heavily; surely these are fiery
 “ Darts that Satan did not use at first, which
 “ gives me some Hope that the Battle will soon
 “ be over, since he commonly reserves his sharp-
 “ est Weapons for the latter End of the Fight:
 “ Lord, to thee I come, bruise Satan under
 “ my Feet, and the Glory shall be thine ! ”
 Again,

“ I BELIEVE in the midst of Unbelief; I
 “ hope I can say, I know what it is to stay
 “ upon

“ upon God in the midst of Darknes, to
“ have Joy in Sorrow, and to act some Faith
“ in the most high, even when I have great
“ Cause to bewail my Unbelief.” Again,
“ My Spirits almost fail, Grace is at so low an
“ Ebb with me.—O how unstable an Heart have
“ I! ready to give up all!—The Spirit is much
“ withdrawn from almost all God’s People :—I
“ bitterly mourn that the Glory is departed from
“ *Israel*, and Faith scarce to be found on the
“ Earth.—But still, blessed be God, I can
“ mourn for this; and that I feel some return-
“ ing Joy in the believing Hope that the Day
“ of the Lord is at hand; and can with my
“ whole Soul cry out, *Come Lord Jesus, come*
“ *quickly!*”

AND, once more, on another Occasion, she
breaths out the Comfort of her Heart in these
Words.—“ O blessed State of the World
“ above! to see God Face to Face! and to be-
“ hold the exalted Redeemer! to enjoy the
“ Company of Angels, and of the Spirits of
“ just Men made perfect! What a World of
“ Delight and Pleasure must that be? And as
“ it will be without Interruption, so it will be
“ without End! — O ravishing Thought!
“ There shall be *Fulness of Joy and Pleasures*
“ *for evermore!* Lord, bring me safe to that
“ Harbour, though it be through never so
“ rough a Sea!—There is a strict Friendship
“ past between God and my Soul; he hath suf-
“ fer’d me to draw nigh to him this Day,
F 2 “ even

36 A SERMON on the Death

“ even to his Throne. Let it be for my fu-
 “ ture Establishment. — I have found *the*
 “ *Valley of Achor for a Door of Hope*, and
 “ been made to rejoice as in the Days of my
 “ Youth, as in my first Espousals to Christ.
 “ He has made my *Light break forth as the*
 “ *Morning*, and has *satisfied my Soul in Drought*.
 “ — I set my Hand to this, that none of God’s
 “ Promises ever fail’d me, but he has been con-
 “ tinually fulfilling them to me, from the Day I
 “ first gave myself to him. I leave this Testimo-
 “ ny behind me for the Encouragement of others,
 “ not knowing how soon I may be removed to
 “ my everlasting Home.” These Extracts will
 give some Idea of the devout and heavenly
 Temper of Mind this excellent Person main-
 tain’d.

IT pleas’d the Lord to exercise her, for the
 last ten Years of her Life, with a declining
 State of Health; during which Time, she
 pass’d through many Paroxysms of excessive
 Pain, and was oftentimes, in the Opinion of
 her Friends and Physicians, in dying Circum-
 stances. God was pleas’d to sanctify this long
 and heavy Visitation to the great Improvement
 of her Graces, and to such an entire Recon-
 ciliation to the divine Will, as few have en-
 joy’d.

HER Faith and Patience, under this long
 Affliction, were much nourished by the Words
 of my Text, together with the following
 Passages of Scripture, among many others,
 which

which often dropp'd from her Lips.—*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength: They shall mount up with Wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint*^d.—*Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismay'd, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness*^e.—*He shall deliver thee in six Troubles: yea, in seven there shall no Evil touch thee*^f.—*Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God*^g. She also greatly delighted in the xxxivth Psalm, and often directed it should be read to her, when, through her Weakness, she could not read herself.

THERE was, about four Years since, for a short Time, such an Appearance of her Recovery as seem'd to promise a perfect Restoration, when, as she sat at Dinner with her Family round her, she had a most sudden paralytick Seizure on one Side; but the perfect Exercise of her Reason continuing, she declar'd she esteem'd it the express Summons of Heaven; and, having shed a few Tears over her dear Family, it is hardly possible to express with what humble Resignation she submitted to the Stroke, and with what Christian Courage

^d Isa. xl. 31.

^e Psalm xlii. 11.

^e Ch. xli. 10.

^f Job v. 19.

38 A SERMON on the Death

rage and Prefence of Mind, with what Reasoning and Persuasion, she labour'd to calm the Passions of all about her. Repeated Attacks of this Kind baffled all the Power of Medicines, and soon depriv'd her of almost any Capacity to help herself. Under these Circumstances, she would indeed sometimes express some Uneasiness at the Delay of her desired Departure, saying "Why am I kept here? sure my Work seems to be done. What doth my heavenly Father design by the Continuance of one in Life, who is so useless?" And when her Friends would express their Desire of her longer Stay, and apply to the Throne for it, she would say, with some Emotion, "Let me go Home, let me go Home." To which she would also often add the dying Words of the excellent Mr. *Rutherford*, (with whose Letters she all her Life-time intimately conversed) *Glo-ry, Glory, dwells in Immanuel's Land*. But, during the latter Part of her Time, she scarce made any Complaint at all, or discover'd any Instance of Impatience, but when the Seasons of public Worship return'd, and it was become impossible by any Method to carry her thither.

For a considerable Time before her Death, tho' her Speech and Memory were much impair'd, such was the divine Goodness to her, that she seem'd to have no Pain, but maintain'd a constant chearful Frame of Spirit, waiting for her Dissolution: and at last, by a sudden,

sudden, tho' a gentle Attack of her Distemper, her precious Soul was set at Liberty, and, no doubt, fled into the Arms of her dear Lord, with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

AND now, my Dear and Honoured Brother, give me leave just to hint, for I know to whom I speak, that you will with all Thankfulness remember the kind Hand of God, in giving you *such a Companion*, one so every way suited to you, *a Helper of your Faith and Joy*; and that the Mercy was continued to you so long. I need not tell you God had a prior and superior Right, and that he has taken but his own. The Delight of your Eyes is gone, but her God, and yours, lives your unchangeable *Portion*. She had no more Work to do for God or you: look then beyond the Grave, see the immortal Crown she wears, and moderate your Grief; a little Time will unite you again in a State of perfect Bliss and Triumph. May the God of Heaven make up your Loss! and long continue your valuable Life a Blessing to the Church, your Family, and the world!

AND you the dear Offspring of this excellent Parent, forget you will not, I think you cannot, the Manner of her Conversation among you; the many affectionate Cries she sent up to Heaven for you, the instructive Counsels she so tenderly, so early, and so constantly instill'd into you. You know, she
dearly

40 A S E R M O N on the Death

dearly lov'd you; but it was for your Souls she was chiefly concerned; and, blessed be God, she had a pleasing Prospect, as to *every one of you*, that her Desires were answer'd, and her Labour not in vain. Children of such Parents as God has honour'd you with, have much Cause to be thankful, and much to answer for. The Lord enable you to copy out their Excellencies, and may you frequently call to mind that your Mother liv'd *much*, and liv'd *well* with God in secret, went through the World with unspotted Reputation, was beloved of all, eminently faithful, and greatly useful.—
— Go, in the Strength of the Lord, *and do likewise.*

I NEED not tell you the Duty you owe to your honoured Father, you have been trained up from your Infancy in the Knowledge and Practice of it; and I am sure, if any thing can make you more watchful to oblige him, this Providence will have its Weight with you: His Comfort now, under God, greatly depends upon your Conduct. The Lord grant you all suitable Supplies of Grace, that after a Life of exemplary Usefulness in your different Stations, you may be acknowledged of God, as *his Children, in the Day in which he makes up his Jewels* &c.

AND should not this mournful Providence, be of quickning and instructive Advantage to us all? The present State of Things, as to us, will

6002

soon be over; Death is before us, and the Judge is at the Door^h; whose Turn it may be next, God only knows: How is it then with us? Can we say, *Our Conversation is in Heaven*ⁱ? that if the Summons were given out this Day, we could, with humble Boldness and Comfort, lift up our dying Eyes to our God and Father, and cry out, *Whom have we in Heaven but thee?* Or are we groveling on the Earth, sensual and carnal, unthoughtful about this awful and important Change, and the necessary Preparation for it. Death will soon put an End to our Condition here, and fix us in an endless State of Joy or Woe. The good Lord lay it upon our Minds, so to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom^k; for blessed, and only, and infinitely blessed are the dead who dye in the Lord, for they rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them^l.

To conclude: May the Example of the excellent Person, whose Decease gave Occasion for this Discourse, be so happily blessed to our Advantage, as to put us upon a more conscientious Walk with God in secret, inspire us with a greater Zeal for his Glory, and engage us to press more earnestly towards the Mark; that when Death comes, it may find us in our

G

Master's

^h James v. 9.

ⁱ Phil. iii. 20.

^k Psal. xc. 12.

^l Rsv. xiv. 13.

42 A SERMON on the Death, &c.

Master's Work, with our *Loins girt*, and our *Lamps burning*; and that we also, to the everlasting Honour of sovereign Grace, may then hear him say, *Well done good and faithful Servants, enter ye into the Joy of your Lord* ^m.

^m Matt. xxv. 21;



The E N D.